COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Rural or Urban status of areas are decided on the basic of latest Census figures. Accordingly, the status in respect of some of the areas have been modified on the basis of 2001 Census.

(b) and (c) No separate criteria of deciding the rural characteristics of villages is laid down by the Telecom Department. Various pockets/villages are classified as 'Rural' as per the list issued by the Registrar General of India and Census Commissioner in accordance with 2001 Census. The Planning Commission has clarified that the Census of India is the nodal agency to identify all areas into Urban and Rural. Instructions have already been issued to categories urban and rural areas as per the latest list of areas available with the Registrar General of India, Census Commission of India or their Regional Offices located in the respective States after 2001 Census.

**Post offices in rural areas**

972. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Post Offices in the rural areas as on the 1st April, 2003, State-wise, and the average population covered by a Post Office; and

(b) the number of post offices having long distance telephone and telegraph and fax facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) The number of Post Offices in rural areas is 1,39,081 and the average population covered by a Post Office in rural areas is 5,337 (as on 1.4.2003). The State-wise details of the number of post offices, and the average population covered by a Post Office are given in the Statement. (*See* below)

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of House.

*covered by one Post Office as on 1-4-2003*

| Sl. No. | Circle | Post Offices in Rural Areas | Population served by a Rural PO (based on 2001 Census) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Andhra Pradesh | 14857 | 3717 |
| 2. | Assam | 3695 | 6292 |
| 3. | Bihar | 8607 | 8621 |
| 4. | Chhattisgarh | 5366 | 3097 |
| 5. | Delhi | 80 | 12000 |
| 6. | Gujarat (including Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu) | 8234 | 3908 |
| 7. | Haryana | 2327 | 6433 |
| 8. | Himachal Pradesh | 2655 | 2064 |
| 9. | Jammu & Kashmir | 1492 | 5067 |
| 10. | Jharkhand | 2776 | 7536 |
| 11. | Karnataka | 8569 | 4062 |
| 12. | Kerala & Lakshdweep | 4195 | 5639 |
| 13. | Madhya Pradesh | 5029 | 8805 |
| 14. | Maharashtra | 11270 | 4945 |
| | Goa | 202 | 3366 |
| 15. | North Eastern States | | |
| | Arunachal Pradesh | 291 | 2990 |
| | Manipur | 683 | 2665 |
| | Meghalaya | 458 | 4039 |
| | Mizoram | 361 | 1247 |
| | Nagaland | 300 | 5467 |
| | Tripura | 663 | 3997 |
| 16. | Orissa | 7566 | 4125 |
| 17. | Punjab (including Chandigarh) | 3437 | 4805 |
| 18. | Rajasthan | 9648 | 4485 |

| Sl. | Circle | Post Offices in | Population served |
|---|---|---|---|

| Sl. No. | Circle | Post Offices in Rural Areas | Population served by a Rural PO (based on 2001 Census) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19. | Tamil Nadu (including Pondicherry) | 10205 | 3434 |
| 20. | Uttar Pradesh | 15707 | 8375 |
| 21. | Uttaranchal | 2491 | 2533 |
| 22. | West Bengal | 7633 | 7563 |
| | Sikkim | 195 | 2462 |
| | A. & N. Islands | 89 | 2697 |
| | TOTAL; | 139081 | 5337 |

**Procurement of equipments and network by BSNL**

973. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited had initiated a process of limited tender a year ago for procurement of equipments and network for 2.5 million lines, because of the urgency of the requirement;

(b) whether one of the bidders Motorola had quoted rates 50% higher that the comparable market rates;

(c) whether despite passage of a year in the process, the BSNL has completed the process of procurement and installation; and

(d) if not, whether an open tender would have ensured lower bids?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The notice for Inviting limited tender was issued on 29th July, 2003.

(b) The quote received from M/s Motorola was higher compared to procurement price of previous tender. However after negotiations the price per line have been brought down to a lower level i.e. by about 23% less when compared to the last procurement price.